

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /037 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2986

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAS 2, 3, & 4 ADDED AND SECTION  
1 OF 3 VICE 1 OF 2)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SCUL, UR

SUBJECT: GLAZUNOV STAGES MAJOR ART EXHIBIT

SUMMARY: EXTENSIVE EXHIBIT OF WORKS BY RUSSIAN  
NATIONALIST PAINTER GLAZUNOV OPENED JUNE 2 AND IS  
ATTRACTING LARGE CROWDS IN CENTRAL MOSCOW MANEZH  
HALL. WHILE WORKS SHOWN DO NOT INCLUDE CONTROVERSIAL  
"MYSTERY OF THE 20TH CENTURY", COLLECTION STILL  
PROBABLY THE MOST POLITICALLY DARING TO BE HUNG  
IN MANEZH IN RECENT MEMORY.

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1. CURRENT MOSCOW ARTISTIC SENSATION IS RETROSPECTIVE  
EXHIBIT OF OVER 400 WORKS DONE OVER THE LAST  
TWENTY YEARS BY RUSSIAN NATIONALIST PAINTER ILYA  
SERGEEVICH GLAZUNOV. MAIN ATTRACTION IS HUGE  
CANVAS TITLED "PRODIGAL SON", FEATURING CHRIST  
WELCOMING BACK TO THE GREAT RUSSIAN FOLD A KNEELING  
YOUTH DRESSED ONLY IN JEANS, AGAINST A BACKGROUND

OF WORLDLY DISSIPATION, INTERSTELLAR TECHNOLOGY, AND HINTS OF A CANNIBALISTIC LAST SUPPER. SURGING CROWD OF AT LEAST ONE THOUSAND --MOSTLY WITHOUT INVITATION--MOBBED SINGLE-DOOR ENTRANCE AT OPENING FRIDAY, JUNE 2, BEFORE GOOD NATURED MILITIA RESTORED ORDER AND SET UP LINE EXTENDING AROUND CENTRAL MOSCOW MANEZH EXHIBIT HALL, JUST OFF RED SQUARE. CROWDS OBSERVED WAITING IN LINE ON SUBSEQUENT DAYS HAVE BEEN UNDIMINISHED.

2. GLAZUNOV IS CREATOR OF MUCH PUBLICIZED "MYSTERY OF THE 20TH CENTURY", WHICH BRINGS TOGETHER ON ONE HUGE CANVAS SUCH DISPARATE FIGURES AS SOLZHENITSYN, STALIN, HITLER, AND LENIN. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS AND OTHERS AS RECENTLY AS A FEW MONTHS AGO, GLAZUNOV TOOK STRONG LINE THAT HE WOULD NOT EXHIBIT IN SOVIET UNION UNLESS "MYSTERY" ALLOWED TO BE HUNG. AS READERS WILL RECALL, AUTHORITIES' REFUSAL TO ALLOW THIS LED TO ABORT OF MAJOR GLAZUNOV EXHIBIT LAST YEAR. YET "MYSTERY" IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN IN CURRENT EXHIBIT. GLAZUNOV TOLD AT LEAST ONE WESTERN VISITOR THAT HE SMUGGLED "MYSTERY" OUT TO WEST GERMANY, BUT WAS NOT ABLE TO FIND EXHIBITOR IN EITHER FRANKFURT OR WEST BERLIN. "YOU TALK ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION", HE REPORTEDLY CHIDED HIS VISITOR, "YET AFTER ALL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE TROUBLE IT TOOK TO GET THE PAINTING OUT, I COULDN'T FIND ANYONE TO SHOW IT."

3. IN ANY EVENT, A CLOSE COLLEAGUE OF GLAZUNOV TOLD EMBOFF THAT DURING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN GLAZUNOV AND CULTURAL AUTHORITIES ON CURRENT EXHIBITION, NOT A WORD WAS SAID BY EITHER SIDE ABOUT "MYSTERY". THIS SOURCE ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT COMMISSION WHICH GAVE FINAL STAMP OF APPROVAL TO EXHIBITION SAID NOTHING ABOUT THE POLITICAL CONTENT OF ANY OF THE PAINTINGS. ONLY ONE PAINTING WAS REMOVED, THAT OF A NUDE RECLINING ON A COUCH (A NUDE STANDING AGAINST A BACKDROP OF BIRCH TREES, HOWEVER, STILL REMAINS). COMMISSION REPORTEDLY ALSO QUESTIONED BUT DID NOT REMOVE TWO OTHER UNSPECIFIED WORKS.

4. EXHIBIT ORIGINALLY WAS SCHEDULED TO OPEN WEDNESDAY, MAY 31. GLAZUNOV COLLEAGUE ASSURED EMBOFFS THAT TWO DAY DELAY IN OPENING WAS TRULY FOR TECHNICAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL REASONS: GIVEN LARGE NUMBER OF PAINTINGS, SOME REARRANGING AND REHANGING WAS NECESSARY

AT LAST MOMENT. INVITATIONS AND POSTERS, IN FACT,  
HAD BEEN PRINTED WITHOUT MENTION OF A SPECIFIC  
OPENING DATE.

5. OPENING CEREMONIES WERE A REAL CULTURAL HAPPENING  
AS WELL AS MEDIA EVENT, REplete WITH LONG LINE AT  
CATALOG COUNTER AND A GOOD NUMBER OF MILITARY AND  
MILITIA OFFICERS PRESENT AS SPECTATORS. KHALTURIN,  
AN OFFICIAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION  
OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS, INTRODUCED GLAZUNOV. AFTER  
PRO FORMA MENTION OF HIS BAM (NEW TRANS-SIBERIAN  
RR UNDER CONSTRUCTION), CHILE, AND VIETNAM WORKS,  
GLAZUNOV MADE POINT IN SHORT REMARKS THAT "MY IDEAS

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SECTION INFO)

ARE SELF EVIDENT FROM MY PAINTINGS AND I LEAVE IT  
TO YOU TO JUDGE THEM." AVOIDING ALL MENTION OF  
SOCIALIST REALISM, THE WORKS OF BREZHNEV, OR THE  
25TH PARTY CONGRESS, HE INSTEAD QUOTED FROM 19TH  
CENTURY RUSSIAN POET PUSHKIN. ARTICLE IN JUNE 6  
"SOVETSKAYA KULTURA" LIKEWISE MAKES NO MENTION

OF SOCIALIST REALISM, INSTEAD PRAISING GLAZUNOV FOR "FAITHFULLY DEVELOPING THE BEST TRADITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN REALISTIC SCHOOL OF PAINTING." THAT NIGHT'S SIX P.M. TV NEWSCAST GAVE VERY POSITIVE COVERAGE, ALTHOUGH IT LINGERED ON THE BAM, CHILE, AND VIETNAM WORKS. IZVESTIYA ALSO NOTED OPENING IN POSITIVE TERMS. WE HAVE YET TO SEE, HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF SHOW.

6. EXHIBIT CONSISTS OF FOUR SECTIONS: WORKS DEVOTED TO THE GREAT RUSSIAN THEME, PAST AND PRESENT; PORTRAITS OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS; ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE RUSSIAN CLASSICS (DOSTOYEVSKY AND LESKOV, FOR THE MOST PART); AND THE BAM, CHILE, AND VIETNAM WORKS, MOSTLY PORTRAITS WHICH RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION FROM THE OPENING-DAY CROWD. THEMATICALLY AND POLITICALLY, OF COURSE, THE RUSSIAN CANVASES ARE THE MOST INTERESTING. THEIR ARTISTIC QUALITY, HOWEVER, IS UNEVEN, AT TIMES BORDERING ON THE SHLOCK AVAILABLE IN LOCAL TOURIST STORES. BESIDES "PRODIGAL SON", THE OTHER MAJOR NEW WORK IN THIS CATEGORY IS "CHILDHOOD OF ANDREI RUBLEV": RUBLEV'S FATHER, HIS OWN NEATLY SEVERED HEAD IN ONE HAND, WITH THE OTHER PASSES SWORD OF BATTLE ON TO SON, WHILE FLAMES LEAP BEHIND AND A MONGOL FACE SMIRKS OFF TO ONE SIDE. OTHER INTERESTING CANVASES INCLUDE AN AGING WORKER, GLASS OF VODKA IN HAND, COMPLETELY OBLIVIOUS TO SOCIALIST REALIST POSTERS BEHIND HIM; AND AN ELDERLY ELEVATOR MATRON SITTING IN FRONT OF PRAVDAS STUCK IN MAIL BOXES.

7. COMMENT: THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST POLITICALLY DARING EXHIBIT TO APPEAR IN MANEZH IN RECENT MEMORY, GOING AS FAR IF NOT FURTHER --ALTHOUGH IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION--THAN THE LAST MAJOR OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED "UNOFFICIAL" EXHIBIT, HELD IN 1975 AT OUTLYING ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS (VDHKH) SHOW GROUNDS. THE LATTER, HOWEVER, WAS NOTABLE MORE FOR FORM THAN CONTENT. BY CONTRAST, GLAZUNOV'S RELIGIOUS GREAT RUSSIAN NATIONALISM CAN EASILY BE INTERPRETED AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CRITICAL OF REGIME POLICIES IN INTERTWINED FIELDS OF NATIONALITY, RELIGION, AND CULTURAL POLICY. HIS

CARICATURE OF GOLDEN HORDE AND EVEN VIETNAMESE  
FACES BORDERS ON THE RACIST, AN ATTITUDE GLAZUNOV  
MAKES NO EFFORT TO HIDE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION.  
HIS PORTRAITS OF UNOFFICIAL HISTORIAN IVANOV-  
SKURATOV, WHO HAS SPENT TIME IN PRISON CAMP FOR  
AFFILIATION WITH THE DISBANDED OSIPOV "VECHE" RUSSITE  
GROUP, AND OF A PRIEST APPARENTLY ACTIVE IN QUASI-  
DISSIDENT CHURCH ACTIVITIES, ARE LIKEWISE POLITICAL  
STATEMENTS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. GLAZUNOV ALSO CONVEYS  
A HORROR OF CITY LIFE, PORTRAYED AS LONELY AND  
WRETCHED, IN A GOOD NUMBER OF HIS WORKS.

8. GIVEN ITS CONTROVERSIAL NATURE, EXHIBIT MUST  
HAVE HAD HIGH LEVEL APPROVAL, IF NOT ENDORSEMENT.  
RECENT CONTROVERSY OVER TAMPERING WITH THE "CLASSICS"  
HAS MADE CLEAR THE VITALITY OF GREAT RUSSIAN  
CHAUVINIST SENTIMENTS, ALTHOUGH PRAVDA'S LAST MAJOR  
STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT (APRIL 29) PAID HOMAGE TO  
THE CLASSICS OF OTHER NATIONALITIES AS WELL. FURTHERMORE,  
MOSCOW-'S QUICK AND APPARENTLY BLOODLESS REVERSAL ON THE ISSUE OF STATE  
LANGUAGE IN GEORGIA, ARMENIA AND AZERGAIDZHAN SHOWS THAT MODERATES AMONG  
THE LEADERSHIP CAN MORE THAN HOLD THEIR OWN.  
POSSIBILITY EXISTS, THEREFORE, THAT GLAZUNOV  
EXHIBIT COULD IN PART BE MOVE BY AUTHORITIES  
TO LET OFF GREAT RUSSIAN STEAM, RATHER THAN  
SIMPLY CLEAR-CUT RUSSITE ADVANCE.

9. GLAZUNOV HAS TOLD EMBOFF HE VIEWS  
HIMSELF AS SOMEWHAT SOLITARY FIGHTER FOR GREAT  
RUSSIAN THEMES IN THE ARTS, REPRESENTING THE  
SENTIMENTS OF "MILLIONS" OF FELLOW RUSSIANS.

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SECTION INFO)

CERTAINLY THE LONG LINES WAITING TO SEE HIS WORKS  
LEND CREDENCE TO HIS CLAIM AND GIVE WITNESS TO  
HIS SKILLS AS A CLEVER PROPAGANDIST IF NOT GREAT  
ARTIST. TOON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ARTS, EXHIBITS, NATIONALISTS, CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 14 jun 1978  
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**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Review Event:**  
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**SAS ID:** 2358834  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GLAZUNOV STAGES MAJOR ART EXHIBIT SUMMARY: EXTENSIVE EXHIBIT OF WORKS BY RUSSIAN NATIONALIST PAINTER GLAZUNOV OPENED JUNE 2 AND IS  
**TAGS:** PINT, SCUL, UR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/8a733289-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
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